

CATHERINE'S EMBASSY TO FLORENCE

of the indemnity (less than half what the Pope had originally demanded), and were on the point of coming to terms on the other conditions.

On the evening of March 27, two hours after sunset, there came a knocking at the Porta San Frediano, and a cry : *Open quickly to the messenger of peace*. The guards drew back the bolts, but saw no one. But the cry spread through the city : *The olive has come, the peace is made*. Men rushed from their houses repeating it, carrying torches, and began to illuminate the city. The priors, having no tidings, issued a proclamation bidding every one go quietly home, and not leave his house again till the morning. A few days later, the news reached Florence that Pope Gregory had died at that very hour.¹ Men said that it was the Angel of God that had come; but was it not rather the Pontiff's own unquiet ghost, seeking a reconciliation with the city that he had cast out of the bosom of the Church ?

For the first time for seventy-four years, a new Pope was elected in the Vatican, on April 8. Couriers rode into Florence with the news that the Roman cardinal, Francesco Tebaldeschi, had been raised to the papacy.² Quickly followed the official notification that not Tebaldeschi, but " the Lord Bartolommeo of Bari " had been made Sovereign Pontiff, and had taken the title of Urban VI. What this meant, and what had happened, will be seen presently.

On the news of Gregory's death, the papal representatives left Sarzana, the peace negotiations having thus come to an end without result. In May, the Florentines sent eight ambassadors, two from each quarter of the city, to honour the new Pope Urban. Four of these envoys, Donato Barbadori, Alessandro dell' Antella, Pazzino Strozzi, and Stoldo Altoviti, together with Filippo Corsini (the brother of the Cardinal of Florence), were further lamed as procurators of the Republic to conclude peace with the Holy See.

¹ *Anonimo Fiorentino*, p. 352 ; Manni's *Cronichetta E Incerto*, p. 215 ; *Historia Comunitatis Pistonensis (Rer. It. Script., xvi.)*, col. 1104.

² *Cronaca di Ser No/H, Corazzini, I Ctompt*, p. 7.